

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 COLOMB 00727 010337Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01  
TRSE-00 /057 W  
-----010707 083894 /10  
R 281200Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6793

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, CE, ECON  
SUBJECT: PM REITERATES INTENTION TO DISSOLVE ASSEMBLY ONLY AT END  
OF TERM

1. IN THE COURSE OF SEVERAL CAMPAING APPEARANCES OVER THE WEEKEND, PM SIRIMAVO BANDARANAIKE CLARIFIED HER PLANS FOR ELECTIONS, SAYING THEY WOULD BE HELD "IN SIX MONTHS" AND THAT THE NATIONAL STATE ASSEMBLY (NSA) WOULD BE DISSOLVED ON MAY 21. WHILE THIS IS NOT NECESSARILY THE FINAL WORD, IT MAKES A SNAP ELECTION UNLIKELY. ELECTIONS IN SIX MONTHS WOULD MEAN AT THE END OF AUGUST, NEARING THE LAST POSSIBLE DATE IF THE NEW NSA IS TO MEET BY SEPTEMBER 22.

2. HER STATED INTENTION TO REMAIN IN OFFICE UNTIL THE LEGAL END OF HER TERM HAS NOT VARIED OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS ALTHOUGH IT HAD BEEN THOUGHT THAT SHE MIGHT DISOLVE THE NSA EARLIER FOR POLITICAL, ASTROLOTICAL, OR OTHER REASONS. WITH HER PARTY MUCH LESS ORGANIZED FOR THE ELECTION THAN IS THE OPPOSITION UNP AND WITH THE PRICES OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES NOW HIGH, THE PM NO DOUBT FINDS THE PRESENT UNPROFITIOUS. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT DURING THE NEXT FEW MONTHS THE GOVERNMENT WILL INCREASE THE SUPPLY AND LOWER THE PRICE SUCH BASICS AS FLOUR,  
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SUGAR, FISH, AND LENTILS.

3. SHE ALSO INTENDS TO BRING FORWARD SEVERAL BILLS WHEN THE NSA IS RE-ASSEMBLED. ALTHOUGH THE SCHEDULED DATE FOR THAT IS MAY 19, THREE DAYS BEFORE THE LEGAL DISSOLUTION OF THE BODY, IT IS WITHIN HER POWER TO CANCEL THE PROROGATION AT ANY TIME AND CALL THE NSA

BACK. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS NOW CLAIM THAT IS TECHNICALLY POSSIBLE TO GET THROUGH HER PRIORITY BILLS IN THE SPACE OF A FEW DAYS BY INVOKING "URGENT" METHODS AS SPECIFIED IN THE CONSTITUTION.

4. THE PRIORITY BILLS ARE REPORTED TO BE 1) BANK NATIONALIZATION; 2) ELIMINATION OF TEMPLE LANDHOLDINGS; AND 3) RESTORATION OF THE FIVE-DAY WORK WEEK, FIRST INSTITUTED UNDER THE EMERGENCY. ALTHOUGH THE LAST IS NOT LIKELY TO AROUSE SPIRITED OPPOSITION, THE FIRST TWO ARE MORE COMPLICATED BY NATURE AND WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF INTENSE DEBATE. THE OPPOSITION WILL PROBABLY OPPOSE THE GOVERNMENT ATTEMPT TO FORCE THE BILLS THROUGH SPEEDILY, ARGUING THAT IF THE BILLS ARE SO URGENT, THE NAS SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN PROROGUED. THEY WILL ALSO SEEK TO INSCRIBE THEIR NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION ON THE AGENDA ABOVE HER PRIORITY BILLS. (N.M. PERERA HAS ALREADY SO ANNOUNCED.) THE PM OBVIOUSLY SEES HER BILLS AS POTENTIAL VOTE-GETTERS BUT, IF THEY ARE NOT PASSED, SHE COULD EQUALLY WELL USE THEM IN HER CAMPAIGN AS EXAMPLES OF PROGRESSIVE LEGISLATION STYMIED BY HER OPPONENTS.

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**TAGS:** PINT, ECON, CE  
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